

# Congress of the United States

## House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION

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[www.house.gov/cha](http://www.house.gov/cha)

September 18, 2007

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker  
H-232, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Boehner  
Republican Leader  
H-204, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Republican Leader Boehner:

By now, it has become obvious to most observers that H.R.811 in its current form is extensively flawed. As evidence of this, I have enclosed letters from election officials, state legislators, election-machine vendors, and interested parties from across the country, as well as recent news columns and editorials that clearly establish that the bill in its current form will have a devastating impact on many aspects of voting, and threatens to destabilize the Nation's existing election system and disenfranchise voters.

I have said for months that I share the sponsor's intent to further improve voters' confidence in our election process by developing a safe, secure, accurate, and redundant system, but that the provisions of this bill cannot be properly implemented on the schedule called for. I doubt you will find a single vote of dissent in the House from the intent of the bill. However, the problems outlined above, and the desperate, last-minute scramble we are witnessing to further amend this flawed bill, in an attempt to piece together a majority vote in the House, is playing dangerously with our vital election processes.

We've now come to a point in this rush to pass something that the National Association of Election Officials has said that this bill, if passed, would literally imperil the continued administration of federal elections by local governments. As a former county commissioner, I find that prospect exceedingly sobering.

I have offered in the past, and will do so again here, to be an active and enthusiastic participant in an effort to regroup on this issue of further improving voter confidence and increasing vote-counting accuracy. We need to bring all interested parties to the table, from the start, to craft a consensus proposal that will pass into law with the support of our colleagues on the state and local levels, as well as the other closely involved parties on this issue. This is precisely what was done to pass HAVA in a bipartisan fashion. It appears that there is now widespread recognition that H.R. 811 is not a proposal that can be resuscitated to something that would achieve a consensus of interested parties, but I am optimistic that we can still pass a bill in

the 110<sup>th</sup> Congress that accomplishes its original, fundamental objective of improving voter confidence through substantive reform.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Vernon J. Ehlers". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Vernon J. Ehlers  
Ranking Republican Member

CC: Majority Leader Steny Hoyer  
The Honorable Rush Holt  
The Honorable Robert Brady  
The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
The Honorable Daniel Lungren  
The Honorable Zoe Lofgren  
The Honorable Charles Gonzalez  
The Honorable Susan Davis  
The Honorable Artur Davis  
The Honorable Mike Capuano